



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

June 30, 2006

FOR: FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION MANUAL DISTRIBUTION

FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION MANUAL - VOLUME V

TRANSMITTAL #66

This transmittal contains provisions for the Virginia Combined Application Project, (VaCAP), a demonstration project aimed at increasing the participation of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients in the Food Stamp Program. Separate rules exist for VaCAP participants with regard to the application, certification period, and interview requirements.

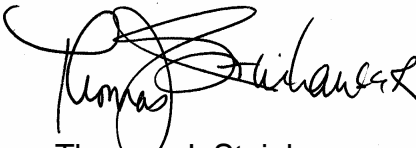
The combined application project will begin August 1, 2006. The Virginia Department of Social Services will mail applications to nonparticipating SSI recipients during August, 2006. Information about the combined application project and the number of applications for each project area will be provided separately to local departments.

All other provisions of this transmittal are effective July 1, 2006.

The transmittal changes and guidance for maintenance of the certification manual follow. The certification manual and this transmittal are available on the Intranet at <http://localagency.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/bp/fs/manual.cgi> and on the Internet at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/fs/manual.cgi>.

Remove Page(s)	Insert Page(s)	Significant Changes
Table of Contents Pages i-ii	Table of Contents Pages i-ii	The Table of Contents was revised to include the combined application project.
Part II Pages i-ii	Part II Pages i-ii	The Table of Contents was revised to include the combined application project.

Remove Page(s)	Insert Page(s)	Significant Changes
Appendix III	Appendix III Pages 1-4	The provisions of the SSI-food stamps combined application project were outlined in an appendix to the application processing chapter.
Part VII Appendix 2 Pages 8-9	Part VII Appendix 2 Pages 8-9	The address for the Washington District Office for immigration services was revised.
Part XIII Pages 9-10	Part XIII Pages 9-10	The manual reference for the standard deduction was corrected in the outline of steps used for computing net income and benefit level.
Part XV Appendix 1 Page 1	Part XV Appendix 1 Page 1	The list of localities that are exempt from the work requirement was revised. Broadcast #3796, issued June 26, 2006, previously announced this information.



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Attachment

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

DEFINITIONS

PART I INTRODUCTION

- A. Purpose of the Food Stamp Program
- B. History of the Food Stamp Program
- C. Issuance Systems and Food Stamp Benefit Use
- D. Personnel and Office Operations
- E. Nondiscrimination
- F. Collection of Racial/Ethnic Group Data
- G. Retention of Records
- H. Disclosure of Information
- I. Program Informational Activities
- J. Family-Based Social Services Policy
- K. Prudent Person Concept

APPENDIX I - FIPS Code Directory

APPENDIX II - USDA Field Offices

PART II APPLICATION/PROCESSING

- A. Application Processing
- B. Filing an Application
- C. Household Cooperation
- D. Interviews
- E. Waiver of the Office Interview
- F. Normal Processing Standard
- G. Delays in Processing
- H. Joint Processing and Categorical Eligibility
- I. Authorized Representatives

PART II APPLICATION/PROCESSING (Continued)

J. Certification Notices

APPENDIX I - Voter Registration

APPENDIX II - Online Application Procedures

APPENDIX III - The Combined Application Project

PART III VERIFICATION/DOCUMENTATION

A. Mandatory Verification at Initial Application/Reapplication

B. Responsibility for Obtaining Verification

C. Documentation

D. Verification at Recertification

E. Verification during the Certification Period

F. Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS)

APPENDIX I - Suggested Client Letter on SSN Update

PART IV CERTIFICATION PERIODS/RECERTIFICATION

A. Certification Periods

B. Notice of Eligibility, Denial or Pending Status

C. Recertification

D. Changing the Length of the Certification Period

PART V EXPEDITED SERVICES

A. Entitlement to Expedited Service

B. Identifying Households Needing Expedited Service

C. Processing Standards

D. Verification Procedures for Expedited Service

E. Certification Procedures for Expedited Service

F. Destitute Migrant or Seasonal Farmworker Households

PART VI HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

A. The Household Concept

PART II APPLICATION/PROCESSING

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
A.	APPLICATION PROCESSING	1
B.	FILING AN APPLICATION	1-2
	1. Agency Action for the Initial Contact	2
	2. Agency Action for the Application Filing Date	2-3
	3. Subsequent Action Required After Filing an Application	3
	4. Withdrawing an Application	3
	5. Contacting the Wrong Locality	4
C.	HOUSEHOLD COOPERATION	4-5
D.	INTERVIEWS	5-7
E.	WAIVER OF THE OFFICE INTERVIEW	7-8
F.	NORMAL PROCESSING STANDARD	8-9
	1. Opportunity to Participate	8-9
	2. Denying the Application	9
	3. Processing Cases with Prior Participation in Another Locality	9
	Contacts with Other States	9-10
G.	DELAYS IN PROCESSING	10
	1. Determining Cause	10-12
	2. Delays Caused by the Household	12
	3. Delays Caused by the Local Agency	13
	4. Delays Beyond 60 Days	13-14
	5. Reinstatements	14-15
H.	JOINT PROCESSING AND CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY OF PA CASES	15
	1. Applications for TANF or GR and Food Stamps	15-17
	2. Applications for SSI and Food Stamps	17-20
	3. Categorical Eligibility for Certain PA Households	20-23
	4. Application Processing for Categorically Eligible PA Cases	23-25
	5. Categorical Eligibility and Benefit Level	25
I.	AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES	26
	1. Making Application	26-27
	2. Using Food Stamp Benefits	27
	3. Restrictions on Appointment	27-28
	4. Documentation and Control	28-29

7/06

VOLUME V, PART II, PAGE ii

PART II APPLICATION/PROCESSING (CON'T.)

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
I.	AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (CON'T.)	
	5. Drug Addict/Alcohol Treatment Centers	29
	6. Group Living Arrangements	30
J.	CERTIFICATION NOTICES	30
	1. Initial and Reapplications	30-31
	2. Recertifications	31
APPENDIX I	Voter Registration	1-3
APPENDIX II	Online Application Procedures	1-3
APPENDIX III	The Combined Application Project	1-4

THE COMBINED APPLICATION PROJECT

The Virginia Combined Application Project (VaCAP) is a demonstration project that is designed to increase participation among single, elderly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients who live alone and have no earned income. Participation in this group has historically been lower than desired, often attributed to the cumbersome application process and low benefit level.

This project will:

- Identify potentially eligible non-participating SSI recipients;
- Produce a simplified, pre-filled, system-generated application;
- Provide simplified processing procedures for local agencies; and
- Provide a standardized benefit based on high or low shelter costs.

A. The Pre-Application Process

1. ADAPT will match against the State Data Exchange (SDX) monthly after cutoff to identify potentially eligible clients who
 - a. Receive SSI;
 - b. Do not currently receive food stamps;
 - c. Live in Virginia;
 - d. Are elderly (age 65 or older);
 - e. Are single, divorced, widowed, or separated;
 - f. Live alone or purchase and prepare alone; and
 - g. Have no earned income.
2. ADAPT will generate an application and will pre-fill the application with the following elements:
 - a. Name
 - b. Date of Birth
 - c. Address
 - d. SSI amount received

7/06

VOLUME V, PART II, APPENDIX III, PAGE 2

3. The Virginia Department of Social Services will mail the application to the household with a postage-paid envelope and the address of the local social services department.

B. The Application Process

1. Upon receipt of the simplified VaCAP application, the household must:
 - a. Correct the preprinted information, if necessary;
 - b. Specify the shelter amount to reflect rent or mortgage and utility expenses;
 - c. Sign the application; and
 - d. Return the application to the appropriate local agency.
2. If the application is complete, the local agency must:
 - a. Process the application;
 - b. Enter the case into ADAPT;
 - c. Send the Notice of Action to approve the case; and
 - d. Issue an EBT card to the household, if necessary.
3. For incomplete applications, the local agency must take the following actions:
 - a. No signature - The local agency must return the application to the household for signature.
 - b. Shelter expense information not provided - The local agency must process the application with the lower shelter amount.
4. If the household does not return the application, ADAPT will generate a second application the following month. No additional applications will be mailed if the second application is not returned.
5. The interview requirement has been waived as well as the requirement to obtain verifications of eligibility factors.

C. ADAPT

In ADAPT, Screen AERESI displays the following:

7/06

VOLUME V, PART II, APPENDIX III, PAGE 3

FOR FS: IF THIS IS A VIRGINIA COMBINED
APPLICATION, SHELTER EXPENSES ARE:

Less than \$500 \$500 or over

This question prompts ADAPT to direct the application into VaCAP and to capture demographic information and the SSI income

The worker must complete required fields and screens, as presented. The entry to denote the frequency or timing of the interim report must be 00, as these households are exempt from filing interim reports.

D. Benefit Level

Benefits for participants in the VaCAP demonstration are not calculated using the process outlined in Part XIII.C. Participants will receive one of two benefit amounts.

- High benefit - If the shelter expenses total \$500 or above, the benefit level will be \$60.
- Low benefit - If the shelter expenses total \$499 or less, the benefit level will be \$42.

E. Issuance of Benefits

VaCAP benefits will not be prorated. The household will receive a full month's benefit beginning the first of the month the application is received in the appropriate local agency.

F. Certification periods

The certification period for all VACAP applications will be three years.

G. Recertification

ADAPT will generate a new application in the month before the certification period expires. The Virginia Department of Social Services will mail the renewal application and the Notice of Expiration to the household.

H. Change Reporting

- a. VaCAP households are not required to report changes. The SDX update process will satisfy reporting requirements for demonstration project purposes.
- b. If a project participant reports a change that affects the household's eligibility for VaCAP or the benefit amount, the worker must act on the change.

TRANSMITTAL #66

I. Conversion

There is no conversion to the VaCAP project.

1. Move from the Regular Food Stamp Program - The household may request closure of the regular Food Stamp case. The household may subsequently apply for VaCAP upon receipt of the computer-generated application.
2. Move to Regular Food Stamp Program - The household may request closure of the VACAP case in order to re-apply to the regular, ongoing program. The worker should evaluate whether this would be beneficial to the household and provide the household the information.

7/06

VOLUME V, PART VII, APPENDIX 2, PAGE 8

Agencies Corresponding to **USCIS, Washington District Office, 2675
Prosperity Avenue, Fairfax, VA 22031:**

Albemarle	Fairfax	Orange
Alexandria	Fauquier	Page
Alleghany/Covington/ Clifton Forge	Floyd	Patrick
	Fluvanna	Pittsylvania
Amherst	Franklin County	Prince William
Appomattox	Frederick	Pulaski
Arlington	Galax	Radford
Bath	Giles	Rappahannock
Bedford	Grayson	Roanoke City
Bland	Greene	Roanoke County
Botetourt	Halifax	Rockbridge Area
Bristol	Harrisonburg/Rockingham	Russell
Buchanan	Henry/Martinsville	Scott
Buckingham	Highland	Shenandoah
Campbell	King George	Shenandoah Valley
Carroll	Lee	Smyth
Charlotte	Loudoun	Stafford
Charlottesville	Lynchburg	Tazewell
Clarke	Madison	Warren
Craig	Manassas	Washington
Culpeper	Manassas Park	Winchester
Cumberland	Montgomery	Wise
Danville	Nelson	Wythe
Dickenson	Norton	

Agencies Corresponding to **USCIS**, Norfolk Commerce Park, 5280 Henneman Drive, Norfolk, VA 23513.

Accomack	Hopewell	Petersburg
Amelia	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth
Brunswick	James City	Powhatan
Caroline	King and Queen	Prince Edward
Charles City	King William	Prince George
Chesapeake	Lancaster	Richmond City
Chesterfield/Colonial Heights	Louisa	Richmond County
Dinwiddie	Lunenburg	Southampton
Essex	Mathews	Spotsylvania
Franklin City	Mecklenburg	Suffolk
Fredericksburg	Middlesex	Surry
Gloucester	New Kent	Sussex
Goochland	Newport News	Virginia Beach
Greensville/Emporia	Norfolk	Westmoreland
Hampton	Northampton	Williamsburg
Hanover	Northumberland	York/Poquoson
Henrico	Nottoway	

- c. Expected rate of payment. Many persons make regular payments on large medical bills over a period of months or years. If regular payments on medical bills are arranged before the bill is overdue these may be allowed as medical deductions in the month the installment payment is due. (PIRS 81-27)

Example

In January, a new applicant reports an ongoing medical expense of \$50.00 per month. This is a payment on a hospital bill of \$1,000.00 that was incurred six months earlier. The client arranged the \$50 per month installment payment before the bill was considered past due. A balance of \$700.00 remains due. The expected rate of pay of \$50 per month may be allowed.

- d. Anticipated expenses

Allowable medical expenses which the household expects to incur during the certification period may be deducted. Reasonable estimates of the expected expense will be allowed for the certification period. The household is not required to report or verify further the actual expenses when it is incurred. An anticipated expense, for which adequate verification has been provided at certification, may be averaged over the certification period or allowed as a one-time expense.

C. COMPUTATION OF NET INCOME AND BENEFIT LEVEL

All households, except elderly and disabled households as described in Part XI.A, must pass gross income prescreening. All households must meet net income eligibility standards.

Monthly gross and net income amounts are determined in the following manner:

- Step 1 List the household's total gross earned income. Include the total net income from self-employment enterprises (gross income from self-employment minus the allowable costs of doing business).

Note: Farm and fishing self-employment losses may be offset against other income. Subtract the farm or fishing loss from non-farm/fishing self-employment income. If the non-farm/fishing gain is greater than the farm or fishing loss, offsetting is complete. Apply this result toward the gross income total.

7/06

VOLUME V, PART XIII, PAGE 10

If the farm or fishing loss is greater than the non-farm/fishing gain, or if there was no non-farm/fishing self-employment income in the household, the negative balance of the calculation gain minus loss, or the farm or fishing loss will be applied against the adjusted gross earned and unearned income total.

- Step 2 List the household's total gross unearned income.
- Step 3 Total the adjusted earned income amount with the unearned income amount.
- Step 4 Subtract the excess farm or fishing loss, if any, from Step 1.
- Step 5 At this point, all households, except elderly, disabled or categorically eligible ones, must pass gross income eligibility limits listed in Part XI.A. For elderly, disabled and categorically eligible households, and for all other households that pass gross income prescreening, continue the calculation in order to apply appropriate deductions to the case.
- Step 6 Subtract the earned income deduction. Compute the earned income deduction by multiplying the combined net self-employment and gross earned income figures by 20%.
- Step 7 Subtract the standard deduction appropriate for the number of eligible members in the household. (Part X.A.1)
- Step 8 Subtract dependent care costs. Do not exceed the maximum amount allowed. (Part X.A.3)
- Step 9 Subtract legally obligated child support payments made by the household. (Part X.A.6)
- Step 10 Subtract the shelter allowance for homeless households that incur or expect to incur shelter expenses during the month. No other shelter costs may be allowed (Step 12) if the shelter allowance is used.
- Step 11 List medical expenses of members eligible for this deduction. Compute the medical deduction by totalling the expenses and subtracting \$35. (Part X.A.5)
- Step 12 The remaining figure is the adjusted net income. To compute the shelter deduction, compare shelter expenses to half the adjusted net income. If shelter expenses exceed half the adjusted net income, the excess shelter expenses can be allowed as a deduction under these guidelines:

7/06

VOLUME V, PART XV, APPENDIX 1, PAGE 1

Localities Whose Residents Are Exempted from the Work Requirement*

May 2003- June 2004	July 2004- June 2005	July 2005- June 2006	July 2006- April 2007
Appomattox	Appomattox	Amelia	Appomattox
Bland	Buchanan	Amherst	Bristol
Buchanan	Carroll	Appomattox	Brunswick
Carroll	Danville	Bedford	Buchanan
Danville	Dickenson	Bland	Carroll
Dickenson	Galax	Bristol	Charles City
Galax	Giles	Brunswick	Charlotte
Giles	Grayson	Buchanan	Danville
Grayson	Halifax	Buckingham	Dickenson
Halifax	Henry/	Campbell	Galax
Henry/ Martinsville	Martinsville	Carroll	Giles
Lancaster	Lancaster	Charles City	Grayson
Lunenburg	Lunenburg	Charlotte	Greensville/ Emporia
Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg	Cumberland	Halifax
Northumberland	Northumberland	Danville	Henry/ Martinsville
Norton	Patrick	Dickenson	Hopewell
Patrick	Petersburg	Dinwiddie	Lee
Petersburg	Pittsylvania	Franklin Co.	Lunenburg
Pittsylvania	Pulaski	Galax	Mecklenburg
Pulaski	Russell	Giles	Norton
Russell	Smyth	Grayson	Patrick
Smyth	Williamsburg	Greensville/ Emporia	Petersburg
Surry	Wythe	Halifax	Pittsylvania
Williamsburg		Henry/ Martinsville	Prince Edward
Wise		Hopewell	Pulaski
Wythe		Lee	Russell
		Lunenburg	Scott
		Lynchburg	Smyth
		Mecklenburg	Sussex
		Norton	Williamsburg
		Nottoway	
		Page	
		Patrick	
		Petersburg	
		Pittsylvania	
		Prince Edward	
		Prince George	
		Pulaski	
		Russell	
		Scott	
		Smyth	
		Surry	
		Sussex	
		Tazewell	
		Washington	
		Williamsburg	
		Wise	
		Wythe	

*The agency must track the work requirement for all household members except those persons under 18 or over age 50.

TRANSMITTAL #66